

## **AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**

### **July 12, 2007**

**Members Present:** Elsie Fetterman, Janet Gorth, Rosemary Kofler, Tom McAuley, Stephanie O'Keeffe, Barbara Sutherland, David Yaukey

**Absent:** Daniel Clapp, Doris Holden,

**Select Board Liaison:** absent

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

**Guests:** none

#### **Welcome:**

Barbara Sutherland, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:08 AM.

#### **Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the June 7, 2007 meeting were approved and accepted.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Introductions:**

Each COA member did a self-introduction to new members Janet Gorth and Stephanie O'Keeffe, who in turn introduced themselves.

#### **Master Plan:**

**Rosemary**, COA representative to the Comprehensive Planning Committee, talked about the latest work of the CPC Work Groups. A set of strategies was developed by each of the seven Work Groups. There are a total of 239 Strategies. They are steps to achieving the Objectives and Goals that each Work Group previously presented to the public in April. The Goals and Objectives were based on the Idea Gathering sessions, which were held in the fall of 2006, when members of the community brainstormed and expressed ideas and wishes for the how they would like to see Amherst develop in the future. Rosemary provided a handout, which stated the goals of each Work Group and highlighted the Objectives and Strategies that specifically applied to seniors. All of the strategies can be viewed at [www.planningamhersttogether.org](http://www.planningamhersttogether.org). Members were encouraged to look at the user-friendly website and submit their comments. Feedback from the community at large is an important part of the process. CPC and Work Group meetings are on break for the month of July. APC, the consulting group, will review our work. It will then become part of the Master Plan for Amherst and be presented to the public and Town Meeting in the fall.

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

#### **Representative needed from COA to HVES Board of Directors for 3-year term:**

**Barbara and Elsie** are currently representatives to HVES. Barbara will continue for another 3-year term but Elsie's term expires. The meetings occur the first Monday of every month from 2-3:30 PM. Barbara mentioned the interesting discussions that take place at the HVES meetings related to keeping elders in their homes. HVES covers 27 towns. The meetings provide an opportunity to gather information about other towns, learn of the services available and meet others. **Janet volunteered to be the COA representative to HVES.**

#### **Nursing Center Update:**

**Nancy** Explained the history of the Nursing Center for the benefit of Janet and Stephanie. The Center was started 11 years ago for the purpose of offering free nursing care to elders. Shirley Packard found benefactors to donate \$10,000/year to the Center. The nurse left in January leaving the position open. Nancy said that we have received several applications for the RN position. The interview process will begin next week. Nancy was also contacted by Jeanne Ryan, the Executive Director of the VNA and Hospice of Cooley Dickinson Hospital (CDH). She wanted to explore the possibility of handling the responsibility of staffing our Nursing Center. Nancy and Senior Health Advisory members Shirley Packard and Ann Grose met with Jeanne and they are thrilled about the

possibility of aligning our center with such a prestigious agency. If the whole Senior Health Advisory Group agrees with the alignment with VNA, our applicants, plus some of the VNA nurses, will all be interviewed by the committee. If one of our applicants is the preferred candidate, the VNA will hire that person. There are numerous advantages to aligning with VNA. CDH is a resource for grants (our grant was denied for outreach work this spring due to lack of a nurse) and it turns out that the person who makes the decision for grants reports to Jeanne Ryan. Thus it opens up a greater possibility for a grant in the future, which becomes increasingly important since our benefactors are quite elderly and that funding could end any time. The opportunities for growth are greater. If our nurse calls in sick, the VNA can supply a substitute. We don't have to be concerned about liability insurance. We can use forms supplied by the VNA. The nurse will be a professional employee of the VNA, not a Town employee. Nancy stated that Jeanne Ryan is very committed to making life better for elders. She is highly respected by the CEO of CDH.

**Maura** added that if the Nursing Center agrees to the collaboration with VNA, then she will look into a collaboration for our Counseling Center too. Licensed Independent Social Workers work for VNA/Hospice and that could be a good resource for our Counseling Center and the Caregiver Support Group. The VNA Social Worker could bill Medicare and help with the funding.

### **Friends Update:**

**Nancy** reported that the Friends Group has met twice. The By-Laws were endorsed. All necessary information has been submitted to the Secretary of State by our attorney. The Friends await their Federal Tax ID Number after which time they can open accounts at the bank. Monies will then be transferred to these from the Travel Club and Senior Center Club whose accounts are currently using the Senior Trust Federal ID number. At the fall Town Meeting the COA/Senior Trust will place an article on the warrant which will ask Town Meeting to approve the immediate transfer of Senior Trust funds given to the Town (at the time of the Sr. Trust dissolution) to the new Friends group. The Trust money will be turned over to the Town ONLY IF it receives Town Meeting approval that it will be turned back to the Friends of the Senior Center. If this approval is not given, then the money will be placed in a Town gift account earmarked for Senior Center programs and services. Nancy advised COA members to alert their Town Meeting members of the importance of their vote on this matter.

### **Deficit Outlook:**

**Nancy** expressed concern about her meeting with the Town Manager. He asked whether the Senior Center newsletter is really needed. He questioned whether the Senior Center really needs a nurse. Nancy explained how important each of those things is for elders and for outreach, and the fact that neither costs the Town any money.

Nancy again asked for Larry's support in using the anticipated Formula Grant increase money (a little over \$600) to augment Marlene's time. At this meeting Larry did finally approve this but warned that further cuts are coming and that the inevitable is just being delayed. He said there is no end in sight to the cuts that are coming. There is no quick fix to the structural deficit. He said that creative alternative funding sources will need to be found to sustain human services programs and services.

### **Retreat October 25<sup>th</sup>:**

**Nancy** hopes that for the retreat we will all think about what our goals are for the new year, what lies before us in educating the community, how to work with the Friends Group to raise funds, ways that we can keep things going with a dwindling staff. Nancy is very concerned about the future and how we can continue to do what we do. Home delivered meals have gone up 12% in the last year – more and more people are not able to get to the Center for the hot lunch program. We need to get the message out that there are poor, frail elders in the community who rely on the Senior Center.

**Stephanie** said it is important that we focus on the percentage of the population that the Senior Center serves not just the rate of growth of the senior population as a whole. There are many seniors in the entire population of seniors who are doing well, but we serve a subset of seniors outside that group. It would be valuable to have statistics on the users of our programs. We need to know what percent of the senior population that is in order to project that forward.

Stephanie also talked about 'program evaluation'. We should communicate to Town Manager the effectiveness of a program: is it working?, do we make changes based on needs?, how can it be done better?

**David** stressed that we often tend to think of the senior population as homogeneous. It is just as complex in composition as any other age group. David will consult with the Director of The Social and Demographic Institute regarding demographics.

**Stephanie volunteered to join Doris on the Retreat Planning Committee.**

### **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

#### **Highland Valley Elder Services:**

There was no July meeting at HVES.

### **COA STAFF REPORTS**

#### **Volunteer Recap:**

**Marlene's** report was detailed on a handout. In FY06 the Center had 236 volunteers who served 10,501 hours of service to seniors (the equivalent of 5.3 full-time staff). Volunteers provide a wide variety of services -- delivering meals (14,435 meals for the lunch program), teaching classes, entertaining for Musical Showcases, assembling and delivering Brown Bags, reading to the visually impaired, visiting the homebound, and more.

#### **HVES Grant Applications:**

**Nancy** is currently working on the Senior Center's grant application to HVES to support the Congregate and Home Delivered Lunch Program for the Federal FY08 fiscal year which starts on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Maura** is preparing grant requests for the Counseling Center and the Caregiver Support Group. The amount of the requests will depend on whether or not the VNA is able to collaborate with the Counseling Center and the Support Group.

The COA meeting adjourned at 10:35 AM.

**The next meeting will be held on September 6, 2007, at 9 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary